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NEWSLETTER

96-701

July 19, 1979

Washington, D.C.

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. Imports account for almost 50 percent of our petroleum needs. We get 26 percent of our imports from nations openly hostile to us—Libya, Algeria, Iran and Iraq. We are dangerously vulnerable to interruptions in the flow of this oil from the Middle East. The latest surge in oil prices and the slowly disappearing lines at the gas pumps clearly demonstrate this vulnerability. Our imports must be reduced. While immediate steps have been taken, we must do more.

In late June, both the House and Senate voted overwhelmingly to finance a large-scale effort to convert synthetic fuels into oil and gas. This legislative action, which I cosponsored and have strongly supported for several years, amends the Defense Production Act of 1950 that will send a message to OPEC indicating the U.S. fully intends to use its technology and ability in removing ourselves from dependence on foreign oil.

Our use of coal will have a dramatic effect on reducing America's reliance on foreign oil. Steps are already being taken to convert coal to clean-burning gas. But gas from converted coal isn't expected to be available on a large-scale commercial basis until the mid-1980's. It won't solve the immediate gasoline shortage but it is welcome news for the future.

Another approach that could play an important role in our national energy strategy by reducing oil imports is gasohol. Recent hearings in my Agriculture subcommittee have determined that this project is feasible. This could reduce the annual nationwide demand for gasoline by as much as five percent of the projected oil consumption figure by 1985.

These efforts are promising. In the long run, of course, we must increase production and encourage the immediate development of other domestic oil sources. Without increased energy production America cannot continue to grow. We need to realize that the energy shortage is not a result of natural causes. It is due to a misallocation of energy resulting from years of government intervention. To relieve us of these shortages, we need fewer regulations, so the free enterprise system can provide the American consumer with the energy he is demanding. Energy producers today spend more time coping with regulations than they do in searching for new energy sources.

The Department of Energy is a major source of the existing shortages because

of its allocation procedures. As a result, the normal operations of the market are totally fouled up. The DOE, in its wisdom, does not provide a single gallon of gasoline. It does not provide a single quart of motor oil. It does not provide the heating oil required by a single home. But its annual \$10 billion budget is equal to the combined after tax profits of every American oil company. All that is needed to ease this problem is to abolish the allocations program and eliminate other unnecessary and costly DOE regulations.

We have one of the world's most generous energy supplies. We have adequate supplies of oil, natural gas, enough coal and other products to supply our energy needs for more than 600 years at the current rate of use.

The answer to the energy crisis is more production. We need a policy which allows us to utilize all our energy sources and permits the economic system to function without restraint. Then the job of abolishing the energy crisis and declaring our independence from OPEC can be attacked vigorously.

* * *

POW'S/MIA'S ARE NOT FORGOTTEN. Last year the Congress passed House Joint Resolution 963, which I cosponsored and strongly supported, designating July 18, 1979 as National POW-MIA Recognition Day. The President signed this proclamation in June.

This is an area of immediate concern to me, having sponsored and supported many bills important to veterans since my arrival on Capitol Hill in 1965. I hope this day will bring the significant meaning of this recognition into every community in the 15th District and throughout our nation.

This recognition to these special veterans is long overdue. America owes a debt for their untold suffering and hardships. On behalf of our grateful nation, I say thank you from the bottom of my heart to all our ex-POW's. We also honor those whose fate is yet unknown, the missing in action, and we assure their families and friends they are not forgotten.

Ceremonies are planned throughout the country and I hope you will join with me in honoring the deeds and sacrifices of these brave Americans.

* * *

VISITORS FROM HOME this week were Jimmy Rivera of Brownsville; Allison Murphy of George West; A M Barker and Dr & Mrs Julian Gomez III of McAllen; Susan Midkiff of Mission; Sandy Brayton of Orange Grove; Craig Davis of Port Isabel; Melissa Huie, Ms Alma Mancillas and Phyliss Mayo, all of Raymondville; Lorraine Cantu, Lee Jones, Marta P Montalvo, Rene Montalvo, Sammy Morrow and Bobby Ogdee, all of San Benito; and Roxanne Franke of Three Rivers.

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